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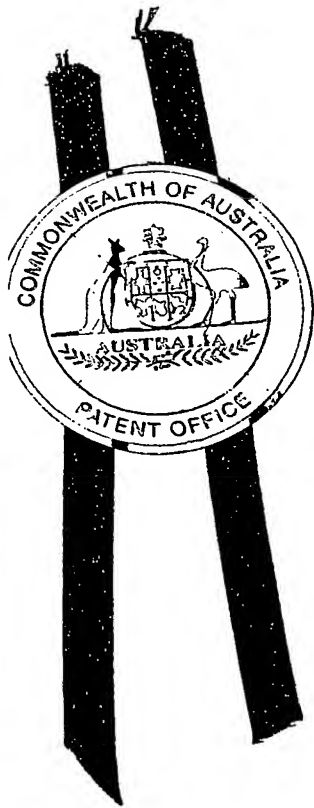
**Patent Office
Canberra**

I, JONNE YABSLEY, TEAM LEADER EXAMINATION SUPPORT AND SALES hereby certify that annexed is a true copy of the Provisional specification in connection with Application No. 2002950502 for a patent by E-CLIPS INTELLIGENT AGENT TECHNOLOGIES PTY LTD. as filed on 31 July 2002.

WITNESS my hand this
Eleventh day of April 2003

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Patents Act 1990

PROVISIONAL SPECIFICATION

Invention Title: ANIMATED MESSAGING

The invention is described in the following statement:

ANIMATED MESSAGING

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a messaging by sending messages by email, over the internet or by SMS telephone messaging or other electronic message transmission.

BACKGROUND ART

It is known to have instant messages over the internet or by SMS telephone messaging. Such transmission can be by typed messages.

On SMS telephone messaging, to quicken the process on certain statements it is known to make use of "smileys" which are fixed simple diagrams within the space of one or two letter configurations and making use of standard parts of letter configurations. Also there are standard fixed more elaborate drawings such as "happy birthday" symbols or the like. However, the rigidity and lack of choice of such diagrammatic features is a distinct limitation.

On internet it is known to have detailed images being sent in either static form or in video format but these are pre-recorded images that are downloaded by digital technology from a memory visually receiving and recording the images. There is the possibility of editing in the sense of cutting and pasting different sections together. However there is no manipulation of the video or image in itself.

It is also known to have digital characters in a movie. However this is generally an automated version of a plurality of drawings. The intermittent drawings can be automatically generated based on where each part is in the preceding and following drawing. However such is still a continuous recorded media which is transmitted and played in its recorded format. There can be no interaction such that the character changes dependent on the input. It is also not suitable for messaging.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with the invention there is provided a method of operation of instant messaging personalities including the steps of:

    providing an animated visual character on an electronic messaging apparatus such as a computer or telephone or the like;

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providing a message in typed or aural form on an electronic messaging apparatus;

sending the animated visual character and message via the electronic messaging apparatus;

receiving the animated visual character and message from an electronic messaging apparatus;

outputting the message by means of the animated visual character in typed or aural form.

The invention also provides a method of operation of instant messaging including the steps of :

providing a message carrier able to be linked with a message to be sent in digital form to a digital media receiver;

providing a message input means able to allow selective creation or selection of a message to be linked with the message carrier;

providing a character profile input able to selectively create or change the character of the message carrier

providing a message output means able to receive the message carrier, the linked message and the character profile such that the message carrier outputs the linked message in accordance with the selected character.

The message carrier in the method of operation of instant messaging can be an animated character. This character can have visual and/or aural characteristics. The character profile could be to provide an emotive character in visual and/or aural characteristics such as by making a happy, gruff, angry, authoritative, scary or other emotive character. The message output can be a voice output such that it appears the character present on the output media speaks the message.

The message carrier could be selected or created in a first step with its character profile and be linked with any or all messages sent by one user such that there is created a virtual digital persona.

Also in accordance with the invention there is provided a digital output media able to receive a plurality of message carriers each linked to a message and able to substantially simultaneously display or output the plurality of messages by the message carriers. The message carriers can be visual characters which can be selectively displayed on a portion of an output screen such that a plurality of visual characters relating to a plurality of message carriers are able to be displayed on the same screen and provide a virtual conversation media. Each message carrier can receive messages from separate input means which could be remote such as over the internet to be incorporated in the one output.

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The system may have an output means with selected characters of a plurality of people defined by message carriers and messages are received not linked to message carriers but related to a defined message carrier and the output means links the input message with the defined message carrier and

5   allows its character to output the message visually and/or vocally.

The invention also provides a method of providing controlled digital transfer across digital media including the steps of:

providing a message carrier with predefined character profile linked to any one or more of

10   a)   a message;

b)   a program; or

c)   data;

and providing an output means of the message carrier by visual and/or vocal means such that the message carrier's predefined character profile, which has visual and/or vocal characteristics, are

15   incorporated in the output of the message or program or data by the output means.

Controlled digital transfer can have interaction means such that a feedback at the output means can affect the operation of the output of the message carrier such that one of a range of options linked with the transfer occurs. In this way an animated character can be virtually conversing with the

20   user of the output means and depending on the feedback by the user will proceed with a selected portion of the message, program or data linked with the message carrier.

The above means can be on one or more computer means, mobile phones or other digital means. It can be software, computer programming or such on recorded media and operative on any one or

25   more of computer means, mobile phones or other digital means.

1.   One of the unique characteristics of our software is that it will enable a user to assign this on screen character to their messaging login name. In doing so, the character will be a consistent identity across multiple messaging platforms, so a user may login in on their computer at work, and their

30   character will be present in their messages. If they move out during the day and move to use of their mobile phone, they will be able to send and receive messages across the cellular network with once again, their representative character. If the use a notebook or portable PDA of some sort, once again

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the same character will be assigned to their unique login name.

2. In terms of delivery mechanisms, the messaging network can be detected by the software, depending on the output device, as to the format that the character is sent in. There is one format for PC and notebooks, another for the PDA's and yet another for cell phones. The software will determine the output device of the message and character required and deliver this to the recipient. However variation may be a fluid software through all devices.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF APPENDICES AND DRAWINGS

In order that the invention may be more readily understood an embodiment will be described by way of example only with reference to the appendices and drawings wherein:

Figure 1 discloses examples of animated personalities;

Figure 2 is a diagrammatic flow chart of the software operation of the instant messaging personalities in accordance with a first embodiment of the invention.

Figure 3 is a diagrammatic flow chart of the communication operation of the instant messaging personalities in accordance with a first embodiment of the invention.

Appendix I discloses instructions on using the Ignore List;

Appendix II discloses instructions on changing personalities;

Appendix III discloses instructions on using message history;

Appendix IV discloses instructions on using email service;

Appendix V discloses instructions on using auto responder;

METHOD OF PERFORMING THE INVENTION

In accordance with an embodiment of the invention there is provided this new software implementation, which works with MSN Messenger and involves instant messaging personalities. This embodiment involves software which is a plug-in for MSN Messenger that lets you make little animated characters of people out of photographs you send to a website. You can make characters that look like you or anyone. Once you make these characters, they automatically are sent when you send instant messages by email, the web, telephone, or other electronic message transfer system- they actually read the messages aloud. You can even go from an instant messaging to a chat session and have everyone's characters talking at the same time

1.   Using the software interface provided in IMP, the user selects a character to act as their personality. Their preference is stored in the database referenced by their Messaging sign in name.

2.   The software connects to the messaging system using COM function calls and then waits for automation events that signify that an incoming message has arrived. When this happens IMP will lookup which personality or character the message sender has chosen. If none is found, the software returns a default personality. This is then loaded into the Software Server and used it to graphically output (using both animated images, text to speech synthesis and recorded audio), to the message recipient.

3.   Where the sender has already chosen a personality or character, or is in use by another sender, the character data (animated images, recorded audio), is accessed directly from the Sof tware server from locally cached files, rather than re-loading it.

4.   The connection to the database of stored information is indirect, it is retrieved though the web server where the content is dynamically generated based on the incoming query.

In order to ensure effective performance of the software, when a user changes their personality, an update notification is sent to all of the User's messaging contacts that are currently engaged in a conversation with that user. The existing personality is then removed from the screen of the user and replaced by their new selection, which is loaded from the Web Server.

The significant differences in the product as opposed to the Standard Instant Messaging product are:
a.   the product (instant messaging personalities) supplements the traditional text message with an "on screen" personality or character that reads the message aloud to the recipient using text to speech synthesis;
b.   it provides the user with the ability to draw from a pool of personalities or create their own unique personality, thereby adding a unique ability to personalize their messages, one that is directly tied to their existing messaging identity (their sign-in name);
c.   the product also provides the ability to send messages to a robot (conversational artificial intelligence – not so unique) that has its own visual personality on the sender's screen;

d.   the product allows search of an internet search engine through the Instant Messaging network (not currently available elsewhere).

The product will allow for transmission of the Message Sender's personality from a Desktop PC to a 3G capable mobile phone or other portable computing device and return SMS Personality Messaging. (Again, supporting the premise that a user will bear a visual identity that delivers the message through text to speech synthesis and text)

Instant Messaging Personalities allows you to choose your favourite personality and send this to your contacts when messaging with Windows® or MSN® Messenger. Custom Characters can be developed. Instant messaging personalities is most useful when your contacts have instant messaging personalities installed as well. This is not essential however to get the full benefit of instant messaging personalities, it is best used in messaging between contacts who have instant messaging personalities installed. If you do not have another contact with instant messaging personalities installed, you can send an Instant Message to an email site which connects you to the chatterbot where you can talk to the robot and send and receive animated emoticons.

Minimum Requirements

It is important to ensure that your PC meets the minimum requirements to run instant messaging personalities.

- Windows Messenger
- An IBM Compatible PC
- Pentium 200 MHz or faster
- Windows XP / 2000 / Me / NT4 / 98
- At least 32MB of RAM
- 10MB of free disk space
- Additional 1 – 4 MB of RAM for each personality
- Internet Connection

Language Support

instant messaging personalities utilizes a technology made available by Microsoft called Microsoft® Agent. Support for multiple languages is available, including English (US and UK), French, Spanish, German, Russian, Korean, Brazilian Portuguese and more. Localized Language components are available for Microsoft Agent. To add a language to the core components of Microsoft Agent, together

with a Text to Speech engine, visit the Microsoft Agent Download pages for information on installing support for languages other that US English.

<u>Personalities and Emoticons for instant messaging personalities</u>

5   Click on the picture of the personality that you wish to see. A larger image will appear at the top of the page. Beneath this you will see which emoticons are available for that personality.

1.   Emoticons and instant messaging personalities

Many people can enjoy using emoticons when using Messenger. With instant messaging personalities

10   you can now enhance this feature by having your personality perform the emoticon on your behalf! To send a Live emoticon simply select the emoticon you wish from the Messenger window, or by typing its text symbol, as you normally would.

NOTE: The first time you send an emoticon to a contact it may take a while to be cached on their PC, this is especially relevant for the high bandwidth personalities, so it may not been seen immediately.

15   However every time you send it after that will be instant!

2.   How Do I change my personality?

Changing your personality is easy. Just right click on the personality on your Desktop. This shows the menu, select "Change Personality" and a new window will pop up. This displays the range of

20   personalities available, you can browse through them, highlight your choice and select choose. Your new personality will appear on your desktop.'

3.   How do I stop one of my contact's personalities appearing?

instant messaging personalities has the ability to stop other users' personalities appearing on your

25   screen. We call this feature an Ignore List.

Any contact that you add to your Ignore List will be blocked from sending you their personality. You will however, still receive their messages and notifications in the default Messenger window. You can add contacts by right clicking on the Personality and opening the Ignore List.

30   4.   How do I STOP all my contacts' personalities from talking?

In addition to the Ignore List, you can also prevent ALL personalities from appearing and talking to you. Just right click on your personality and uncheck Talk to Me. The tick beside talk to me will

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disappear and none of your contacts' personalities will speak to you. Your own personality will continue to alert you as to the status of your contacts.

5. What is "Tell my Friends"?

To get the full benefit from instant messaging personalities, you need to install it and so do one or more of your contacts. We have made it easy for you to tell your friends and contacts about instant messaging personalities. By clicking on "Tell my Friends" in the menu, instant messaging personalities will automatically send an email to your contacts, asking them to download and install instant messaging personalities. The text of the message that is sent by instant messaging personalities appears below.

6. What are High and Low bandwidth personalities?

e-Clips has made available a selection of personalities to begin with, both from their own library and those from Microsoft.

Low bandwidth personalities are intended for users of with a dial-up connection at speeds of 56k or less.

High bandwidth personalities are intended for users with high speed connections such as ISDN, DSL or cable.

Users with slow connections are free to use the high bandwidth personalities, but please be aware that this may cause significant delays.

7. Can I use instant messaging personalities with other Languages?

instant messaging personalities utilizes a technology made available by Microsoft® called Microsoft® Agent. Support for multiple languages is available, including English (US and UK), French, Spanish, German, Russian, Korean, Brazilian Portuguese and more.

8. How do I create a personality?

There are two types of personalities that can be created,

A. Using the service provided by Cyberextruder

B. Creating animated personalities.

The first option is easy, open the menu by right clicking on your personality and selecting "Change my Personality".

Creating animated cartoon personalities is more difficult and requires some experience with development of characters and animation. You can visit Creating a Personality for more information.

9. Does instant messaging personalities support voice recognition?

Yes, it does in part. If you have voice recognition installed you can use voice commands to control the IMPService's functionality.

Once you have set up the voice recognition and trained it accordingly, you can activate it by holding down the Scroll-Lock key on your keyboard, and then speaking one of the following commands.

• Online - Changes your status to Online

• Busy - Changes your status to Busy

• Back - Changes your status to Be Right Back

• Away - Changes your status to Away

• Phone - Changes your status to On The Phone

• Lunch - Changes your status to Out To Lunch

• Offline - Closes down the IMPService application

• Appear - Changes your status to Invisible

• Signout - Closes down the IMPService application

• List - Tells you which of your contacts are online/away

• [Friendly_Name] - By speaking the friendly name of one of your contacts a chat window will automatically be opened for you

NOTE: In many cases, significant time may be required to train the speech engine to recognize your verbal commands. At present, Voice Recognition is available only in English.

10. Will instant messaging personalities support dictation of messages?

Yes it will, in fact that is in beta testing right now. However, if you are not a Windows XP User, it will mean downloading approximately 90MB of software to be able to use the dictation.

In addition, it will mean that you must spend time training your voice engine to improve the quality of recognition and this does take time.

11. What is the Message History for?

As a bonus feature IMPService records the details of all the conversations you have with other users. You can view previous conversations or delete one or all messages. They can be accessed by right-clicking on your personality or tray icon and selecting Message History.

5   13. What is instant messaging personalities Service?
         instant messaging personalities in some beta versions, is a contact that is connected to a robot. It allows you to talk to the robot and also, send emoticons to the robot so that you can see what they look like, before you send them to your friends..

10   12.   Can I search Google with instant messaging personalities?
         Yes you can, among other things, one of the useful tools is that you can search Google through instant messaging personalities.

         15.   What is the Auto Responder for?
15   The Auto Responder allows you to enter a message and it will automatically reply to anyone who sends a message to you, with your text. For example:
         You may be away for several hours however your PC is still turned on. You can type in "I will be away from my desk until 2pm". Anyone who sends a message to you will automatically be receive a reply with this information.
20

High Bandwidth (3MB+)
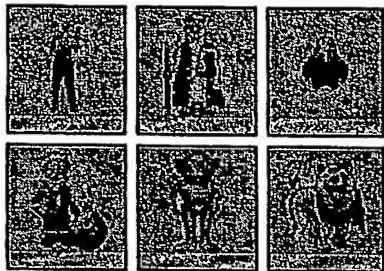
Chino

Chino, a fantastic guy. Be warned, his preview is deceiving. Chino is a BIG personality. If you do not have at least a cable or DSL, don't select Chino. Chino is best suited to the power user, with high speed internet connection and 128MB of RAM or more.

Emoticons

Low Bandwidth (-3MB)

FIGURE 1

FIGURE 2

FIGURE 3

Appendix 1 - Ignore List

You can set instant messaging personalities to ignore one or more or your contacts, this is called the **Ignore List**. To set up your own ignore list, follow these steps:

1. Using your mouse, **right click** on your personality and select **Ignore List.**

2. Locate the name of the contact you want to exclude from instant messaging personalities and double click on the name.
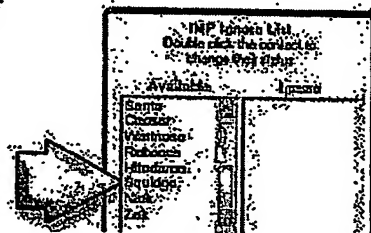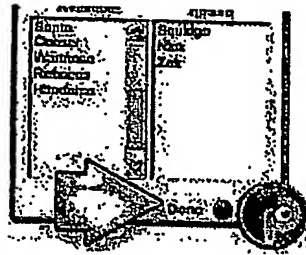
3. Each contact that you double click on will be moved into the **Ignore List.**
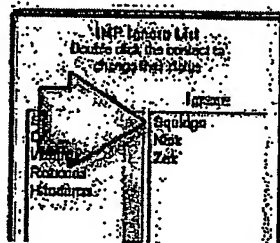
4. After selecting the contacts, click on at the bottom
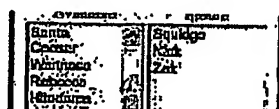
4   After selecting the
    contacts, click on
    Done at the bottom
    of the window.
    instant messaging
    personalities will no
    longer read the
   messages or status
   of these contacts.

Appendix 11 - Changing Personalities

When you install instant messaging personalities, you will be assigned a default personality. This default personality will represent you in your Instant Messages until you change it.

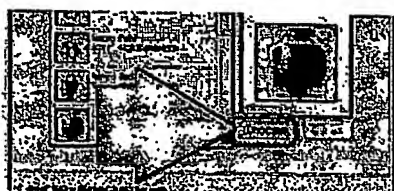Of course, changing your personality is easy, just follow these quick steps.

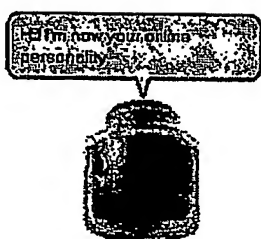1   Using your mouse, **right click** on your personality and select **Change my Personality.**
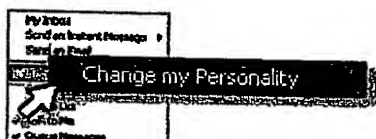
2   A window will open so that you can choose a personality. Click on the small images to view samples.
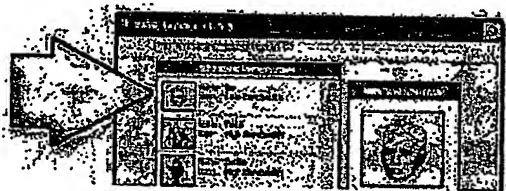
3   Once you have made your decision, click on your chosen personality. Now click on **Choose.**

| 4 | Your new personality will now appear on your screen, ready to deliver your instant messages. | |

> NOTE: You can also access this command by
> right clicking on the instant messaging
> personalities system tray icon, which
> appears next to the clock in your task bar.
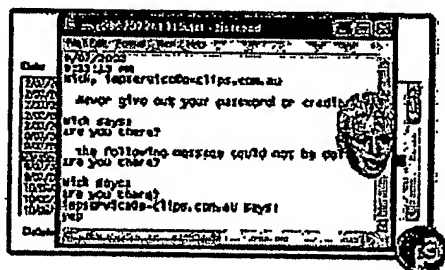
Appendix 111 - Message History

A great feature of instant messaging personalities is that it records
the details of all the conversations you have with other users. instant
messaging personalities records the time, date and participants in the
conversation, as well as the text within the messages. To access the
log file, follow these steps:

1   Using your

personality and
select
**Message
History.**

2   Selecting Message History reveals your
conversation history. It shows the date, time and
contacts in your conversation. The Message
History allows you to view and delete messages.

3   **View Log**

To view a log file, select a message and click on
the View button.
This opens Notepad with the message details.
When you have finished simply close notepad
and click **Done.**

Appendix IV IMPService@e-clips.com.au

You might have been wondering why you now have
impservice@e-clips.com.au in your contact list? Well, it was
automatically added for you when you installed the
IMPService software. What is it for and why?

1

instant messaging personalities Service is
intended
to provide 2 useful features.

2

Did you know...

You can search the Internet using Google™ through IMPService. Send an instant message to impservice@e-clips.com.au and start your message with **google search key words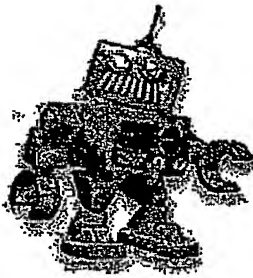**. This will deliver the top 5 search results. To obtain more results, type in: **google more**. Google will deliver more results for you. Enter google more once more and you get? More results.

NOTE: Google is a trademark of Google Inc.

Google

3

In the Future....

IMPService is based on the chatterbot A.L.I.C.E,

conversational tools.

Any **suggestions** you have to improve the
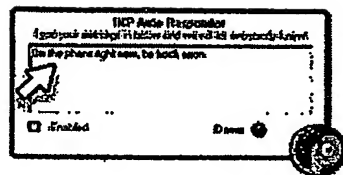services are welcome.

Appendix V - Auto Responder

Have you seen autoresponders before? They are often used to
send an automatic response when an email is received. They
can let other people know that you are on holidays or that
your email has been received and will be attended. Now you
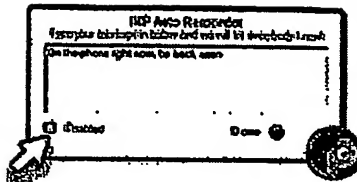can use an autoresponder in your messages, here is how:
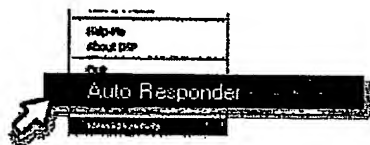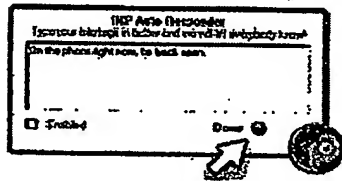
1   Using your

3

Once you have created your message, you need to turn the Auto Responder on.

Check the box marked **Enabled** by clicking on it. A tick will appear in the box.

4

After enabling the auto responder, click on **Done** at the bottom of the balloon.

Your auto responder is now active and will reply with this text you inserted to anyone who sends a message to you.